

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 24, 2003

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 82, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

## TROOPS SHOULD RECEIVE REQUIRED MEDICAL SCREENINGS

### HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 24, 2003

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, with our country's troops now entering into active combat in Iraq, I want to bring to your attention and to the attention of my fellow Representatives an issue made even more timely by the events of the past twenty-four hours.

On March 13th, I sent to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld a letter which I am including in the RECORD with this statement. I encouraged the Secretary to assure that all troops entering the Iraqi area receive medical examinations before and after deployment. The Kansas City Star recently carried an informative article, also included here, summarizing a law enacted by Congress in 1997 that requires such physical and mental screening of our troops, due to the many unexplained illnesses that followed service in the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Our fighting men and women serving in the Middle East face a genuine, immediate threat of biological and chemical weapons. We owe them no lesser level of service and dedication than they are providing in defense of our country. I hope all members of Congress will join with me in ensuring that the commitments made to the members of our Armed Forces in 1997 are kept in 2003 and afterward.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, March 13, 2003.

Hon. DONALD RUMSFELD,

Secretary, Department of Defense, The Pentagon, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I am writing to express my concern regarding a recent article I read in the Kansas City Star March 5, 2003, entitled: "Troops are not receiving medical screenings required by 1997 law." I have enclosed the article for your review.

The article asserts that troops entering the Iraqi area are not receiving medical examinations before and after deployment. As you know, Congress mandated in 1997 that all troops receive such tests to help in identifying future ailments such as Gulf War syndrome which has been extremely difficult to document and treat following the 1991 Gulf War.

I strongly urge the Department of Defense follow the 1997 mandate and if the DOD needs help fulfilling this mandate to accept the Veterans Administration's offer of help to collect and maintain medical information on all troops entering southwest Asia.

I look forward to your response on this important matter.

Very truly yours,

DENNIS MOORE,  
Member of Congress.

[From the Kansas City (KS) Star, Mar. 5, 2003]

## TROOPS ARE NOT RECEIVING MEDICAL SCREENINGS REQUIRED BY 1997 LAW

(By David Goldstein)

WASHINGTON.—Troops heading for the Iraqi theater are not getting health screenings, especially blood sampling, mandated by a law Congress enacted in 1997.

The law, which grew out of concern about unexplained illnesses that followed the 1991 gulf war, required that troops receive mental and medical examinations before and after deployment overseas. The tests are intended to provide clues in case the phenomenon known as gulf war syndrome should recur.

Instead, the Pentagon requires only a brief, one-page questionnaire asking for general health-related information. A top Pentagon health official said blood tests would not be especially useful.

About 300,000 American personnel are now at jumping-off points near Iraq or on their way. Many consider U.S. troops much more likely than in the 1991 war to face biological and chemical weapons.

"The majority of the troops have already deployed . . . and therefore we're not going to have a good picture of their health," said Steve Robinson, a gulf war veteran and executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center.

"Once again, if soldiers are exposed, we do not have baseline (medical) data required to document their status. You're looking at gulf war illness 2."

The Pentagon insists that it has followed the law.

"If the intent was to make sure we had better documentation—yes, we are in compliance," said Michael Kilpatrick, a physician who is deputy director of deployment health support at the Pentagon.

Veterans affairs activists, health care experts and congressional watchdogs are unconvinced.

The law, signed by then-President Bill Clinton, was enacted in response to a chorus of health complaints from gulf war veterans. Many reported a variety of ailments, including headaches, memory loss, rashes, equilibrium problems and loss of motor skills.

The causes were unknown, despite numerous medical studies. Some veterans pointed to the release of chemical or biological agents when Iraqi stockpiles were bombed, the military's hurried vaccinations against those agents, desert diseases and parasites or pollution from burning oil wells.

The syndrome has caused a bitter battle between veterans and the Pentagon, which has refused to recognize it, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, which has had to decide whether claims for medical compensation are valid.

Democratic Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, a former veterans affairs activist, called the Pentagon's program troubling.

"What's the message we're sending to our troops around the world today and those prepared to fight in Iraq?" he asked. "The message seems to be, 'Do your duty to country, but your country won't fulfill its duty to you if you're lucky enough to return home.'"

Kerry, a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2004, has asked the General Accounting Office to investigate whether Defense has met its requirements.

In addition, leaders of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs have asked for a detailed account of Pentagon efforts to track medical data on battlefield troops.

Last month, Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi wrote to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and said the VA wanted to work closely with the Pentagon to collect

"health and exposure data" on those deployed in southwest Asia.

"Much of the controversy over the health problems of the veterans who fought in the 1991 war with Iraq could have been avoided had more extensive surveillance data been collected," Principi wrote.

Mark Brown, a VA toxicologist who has been investigating gulf war illnesses, said Principi's letter was intended to put the VA "on the public record" about its concerns.

The Pentagon's approach, he said, "certainly wasn't adequate in the first gulf war. Have they learned their lesson and done better? Maybe we'll be pleasantly surprised."

The law requires the Secretary of Defense to "establish a system to assess the medical condition of members of the armed forces," including reserves, deployed outside the United States for combat, peacekeeping missions or humanitarian operations.

Kilpatrick said the Pentagon's program was "an evolving process" and part of a concept called "Force Health Protection" that was put in place during the Kosovo conflict in 1996.

Some health officials with the Defense Department appear not to have known what Congress required.

Some gulf war medical researchers proposed a study to the Pentagon a year ago that would track some troops in post-Sept. 11 military operations. The proposed study unknowingly mirrored the elements of the law, and a medical official wrote back, "This sound like something we need to investigate further as something we could like to support."

The project involved studying the Rhode Island National Guard. David Haines, an immunologist affiliated with George Washington University, said he discovered a month ago that the Department of Defense was supposed to be doing the blood sampling that he and his colleagues had proposed to do on a small scale.

"We will do the right thing and step back if DOD is doing great things, but we don't believe DOD has anything like that in place," he said.

According to Kilpatrick, a brief questionnaire is basically the military's response to the congressional mandate because it has other steps already in place.

In the questionnaire troops are asked how they would rate their health, from excellent to poor. They are also asked whether they have any medical or dental problems, whether they wear glasses and whether they have concerns about possible "exposures or events during this deployment."

Anyone answering "yes" to certain questions will be referred for further examination. Rick Weidman of the lobbying group Vietnam Veterans of America, calls the questionnaire "absolutely useless from an epidemiological point of view."

"There's nothing about susceptibility to skin rashes or any of the derivative diseases that are due to some of these kinds of exposures," he said, "and there is no psychological exam. Nothing."

According to Kilpatrick, troops are asked whether they have sought mental health counseling within the past two years, but the military has to rely on personnel being truthful.

"If people say, 'My mental status is fine,' we are not stopping to engage in a three-hour survey to assess people's mental status," Kilpatrick said. "If we are preparing to deploy 20,000 troops, it's physically impossible."

A key element of the 1998 law is the taking of blood samples to establish a medical baseline and help identify possible subsequent exposures to toxic materials. The absence of

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

such tests on veterans of the 1991 gulf war has handicapped researchers.

Blood is always taken for HIV testing, Kilpatrick said, and those samples are in storage. But fresh samples will be taken only if the serum on file is more than a year old, he said.

He disputed the idea that additional sampling would be helpful because the biological markers of many toxic agents disappear from the bloodstream within hours or days of exposure.

Also, Kilpatrick said, troops are physically evaluated every five years, except for pilots, who are tested more frequently. Medical histories were more valuable to researchers than "hands-on" physical exams, he said.

But gulf war medical researchers said the Pentagon's plan is a missed opportunity, especially considering the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

"We can run into the same thing all over again," said Lea Steele, a Kansas Institute of Health epidemiologist who has studied gulf war veterans. "One of the difficulties of the gulf war was we didn't have any evidence prior to the war. It was hard to link illnesses."

"Now that we're becoming a second time deeply involved in Iraq . . . there is no established protocol that would be very valuable. Some people say Saddam Hussein has less to lose now. He may be more likely to use these things."

A TRIBUTE TO JAMES W. LAUGHLIN

**HON. TOM DAVIS**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 24, 2003*

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to James W. Laughlin—one of our Federal Government's finest public servants and a long time resident of the Commonwealth of Virginia. This March he will retire from an exceptionally distinguished career of service to his country. He has served our Nation as a career civil servant for over 42 years. He has been an exceptional leader and has played a key role in ensuring effective financial management for the Department of Defense. It gives me pride to have the opportunity to honor him today for his tremendous accomplishments.

Mr. Laughlin began his career with the Navy in the financial management field working for various field activities. He progressed to a supervisory budget analyst in the Office of the Navy Comptroller where he was responsible for the Navy's operation and maintenance and civilian manpower programs. In 1974 he transitioned to the Office of the Department of Defense Comptroller.

Mr. Laughlin first served in the Department of Defense Comptroller office as a budget analyst in the Research and Development Directorate, responsible for reviewing the Navy and Air Force multi-billion dollar aircraft programs. He then moved to the Military Personnel Directorate where he was responsible for reviewing the Navy and Marine Corps military personnel appropriations.

Since 1982, Mr. Laughlin has been the senior budget analyst for Military Personnel appropriation matters—a portfolio that totals over \$93 billion this year. Mr. Laughlin is an acknowledged expert on Military Personnel funding issues both inside the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill, particularly in the areas of concurrent receipt, military wage credits, and retired pay issues.

Senior leaders, both in the Congress and the Department of Defense, have benefited from his experience, outstanding leadership and distinguished performance. His efforts have enabled our nation's leaders to make the most effective use of defense resources to en-

sure America's military strength. On behalf of my colleagues, I thank him for his service to our country and wish him well on his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. MIKE ROGERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 24, 2003*

Mr. MIKE ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on the legislative day of Thursday, March 20, 2003, the House voted on H. Con. Res. 104, expressing support and appreciation for our Armed Forces and the President participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom. On House rollcall vote No. 83, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

COMMENDING CALIFORNIA WOMEN FOR AGRICULTURE IN HONOR OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 24, 2003*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the California Women for Agriculture as they honor National Agriculture Day. The California Women for agriculture is hosting Agriculture Day in LA! at Moor Field in Alhambra, California on March 21, 2003 to commemorate this day.

In its 30th year, the National Agriculture Day program is committed to increasing public awareness about American agriculture. Producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies, and countless others across America will gather on this first day of spring to celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. National Agriculture Day focuses on educating Americans about career opportunities available in the agriculture, food, and fiber industry.

As one of California's major organizations, California Women for Agriculture helps to "supply knowledge and skills necessary to convey the mutual benefits of a vibrant agricultural economy and healthy rural communities to those who are in positions to impact the future of agriculture in California." California Women in Agriculture, along with the Agricultural Awareness and Literacy Foundation and Alhambra School District, will be hosting the event for 1,200 inner city 3rd grade students who will be learning about food, fiber, flowers, and forests. The goal of the program is to teach students about agriculture and its importance in our everyday lives. The students will participate in a hands-on learning environment with crops, farm equipment, and live animals. They will learn how it contributes to our healthy, affordable food supply; offers many different careers, cares for the environment and creates a diverse food supply.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to commend California Women for Agriculture as they honor National Agriculture Day on its 30th Anniversary. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing the California Women for Agriculture many years of continued success.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT AND APPRECIATION FOR THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOHN B. LARSON**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 20, 2003*

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the men and women who wear the uniform and protect our freedoms. I rise on behalf of their families and loved ones who wait and pray for their speedy and safe return.

This is a solemn moment for the Nation. There has been disagreement here at home and abroad about the policies of preemption. The men and women who wear the uniform don't make policy. They are neither diplomats nor politicians. They are soldiers and their duty is to salute and follow orders. Every member of Congress joins in unwavering support of them and their families for their sacrifice.

I have openly disagreed with the policies that have led us to this moment. This evening we pause as a Congress to salute and honor our troops. And while I strongly disagree with the Administration's policies, this is not the resolution or forum to express my differences. This evening our hearts, our prayers, and our gratitude goes out to the uniformed members of the armed services. God bless them. God bless America.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT AND APPRECIATION FOR THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

SPEECH OF

**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 3, 2003*

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as we begin this arduous process of disarming Saddam Hussein of his weapons of mass destruction, I wish to thank our brave men and women in uniform for their service. Let us pray for their safe return to their homes and families.

During my career in the House, I've continually been struck by the dedication of those who wear this Nation's uniform. Prepared to offer the ultimate sacrifice, they serve for love of their country, for the safety of each one of us, and for the cause of freedom throughout the world.

The expertise and professionalism of our service men and women is without parallel. They understand the significance of their mission, and the dangers, but they will complete this task that has been laid before them.

Their mission is to disarm one of the greatest threats to the free and peaceful people of the world. The Iraqi people will no longer suffer from the horror of Saddam's regime. We must ensure our armed forces can complete this job knowing their country is fully behind their efforts.

God bless our brave men and women.